

City of Falcon Heights Environment Commission

City Hall
2077 Larpenteur Avenue West

Minutes

Monday, June 10, 2024
6:30 p.m.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL: Beth Mercer-Taylor (Chair) X
 John Pellegrini (Vice-Chair) X Jared Mehlhaff A
 Emma Kostecki A Amy Christiansen X
 Pedro De Filippo Vannucci A Adam Keester X

 Staff Liaison Lynch X
 Council Liaison Mielke X

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Pellegrini made a motion to approve the agenda by consent. All were in favor.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. May 13, 2024

Vice-Chair Pellegrini made a motion to approve the minutes from May 13, 2024 by consent. All were in favor.

E. NEW BUSINESS

1. Christine Chitambar – Community Park Pond Tadpole Presentation

Christine Chitambar introduced her son, Theo Baker. Theo is a rising 6th grader who has spent a lot of time around the main pond at Community Park over the years. He has noticed a marked decrease in the number of tadpoles, frogs, and native fish at the pond, and an increase in the number of goldfish in the pond. Some of the goldfish are very large. He stated the water is getting dirtier, and he finds a lot of soda cans, cups, metal debris, and other trash in the water. The Commission discussed this and the Mr. Baker explained he believes the goldfish are eating the tadpoles and causing this disruption to the ecosystem. He believes the goldfish need to be removed. The Commission directed City Staff to look into funding for remove of the goldfish and/or cleaning the pond. Mr. Baker and his mother will continue to research this issue. The

Environment Commission is looking to hold a meeting at the Community Park shelter in the future to allow time to explore the pond and see these issues he is concerned about.

2. Boulevard Tree Replacement Discussion

Staff Liaison Lynch continued the discussion from the last meeting about boulevard trees. She explained some cities have a tree replacement policy codified, while others have it just as a City policy. She explained the Falcon Heights City Code does address boulevard trees and it would be easiest to update this. She also advised that other cities allow residents to plant their own trees in the boulevards through a permitting process. This allows the residents to get the trees they would like, from a designated list, and provides the city with oversight to make sure this is done correctly. The forester would have to approve the type of tree, placement, size, and other concerns prior to the permit being issued. This would also require the resident to acknowledge that despite them paying for the tree, it will belong to the City as it will be in the City's boulevard.

Commissioners also discussed the tree board which would be required by the Tree City USA program. There is a program with UMN Department of Forest Resources, the Tree Steward Program, that could provide training to the City's tree board. The Commission discussed this group of volunteers not being an official commission or a subcommittee of the Environment Commission, but rather just a group that assists with the tree replacements throughout the City. Staff Liaison Lynch stated she would look into this and bring information back to the July meeting.

The Commission also discussed priorities for the tree replacement program. They want to make sure there is a large variety of trees being planted, they include larger trees for shade with a good growth rate, and tree litter is kept out of drains. They also discussed "messy" trees, such as fruiting trees, and that the property owners adjacent to boulevards where these are located must be responsible for cleaning up after these trees. Staff Liaison Lynch stated this was a good starting point for drafting some policies and code language, and she would do this and begin working on a budget.

F. Information and Announcements

1. Staff Liaison Report

Staff Liaison Lynch reminded Commissioners that as it is now June, No Mow May is over, and yards with turf grass need to be mowed. She requested Commissioners keep up the lawns and speak to their neighbors to remind them of the City policy.

2. Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Mielke informed the Commission about the current status of the Community Park building and that it is currently on hold due to pricing. The City is now looking into potentially rehabilitating the existing building.

G. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Next regular meeting date: July 8, 2024